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Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

Report by the Secretariat

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* CEDAW/C/1998/II/1.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report[1] addresses a number of issues raised by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in discussions held during its eighteenth session (19 January-6 February 1998). These include:

- The timing and working methods of the pre-session working group;
- The Human Rights Committee's guidelines for the exercise of functions by members;[2]
- The relationship between CEDAW and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women;
- Practices of CEDAW with respect to concluding comments.

2. The report also contains:

- Relevant issues considered at the ninth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, held at Geneva from 25 to 27 February 1998;
- Recommendations made to the Committee by the Commission on the Status of Women;
- Recommendations made to the Committee by the Commission on Human Rights.

3. Recommendations for the Committee to consider in regard to ways and means of expediting its work are highlighted throughout the report.

4. A list of States parties whose reports are more than five years overdue is contained in annex I to the present report. As requested by the Committee at earlier sessions, the present report also contains a list of States parties whose reports are to be considered in order of receipt, taking into account geographical balance (see annex II).

II. Pre-session working group

5. At its eighteenth session (January-February 1998), in suggestion I, the Committee proposed that its pre-session working group meet at the end of the previous session and that the transition to this pattern of work take place at its twentieth session, in January 1999.

6. Several ways of effecting this transition could be considered by the Committee. These include: scheduling the pre-session working group for the twenty-first session immediately following the conclusion of the twentieth session; scheduling the pre-session working group for the twenty-first session prior to the twentieth session, at the same time as the pre-session working group for the twentieth session; and constituting a third working group during the twentieth session that would serve as the pre-session working group for the twenty-first session. In the case of the third option, this working group could remain for up to three days after the twentieth session to consolidate the lists of issues and questions for the periodic reports to be considered at the twenty-first session.

> Recommendation: The Committee may wish to propose modalities for a smooth transition to a pattern of work where its pre-session working group meets at the session prior to that at which the reports before the pre-session will be considered.

7. At its seventeenth session (July 1997), the Committee decided that the expert from among its members who had been designated rapporteur for a particular country's periodic report should send an introductory report on the most relevant matters relating to the situation of women in that country to the pre-session working group. Responsibility for preparing questions on periodic reports for use by the working group would continue to be shared among Committee members, but three members, including the country rapporteur, would be nominated from among members to prepare questions for each report. These working methods might be assessed by the Committee and further refined, *inter alia,* by identifying further assistance that might be needed from the Secretariat, taking account of the practice of the Human Rights Committee, whose pre-session working group considers a concise list of issues drawn up by the country rapporteur, in consultation with the Secretariat.

> Recommendation: The Committee may wish to propose that country rapporteurs, in consultation with the Secretariat, draw up lists of issues and questions for the use of the pre-session working group with respect to periodic reports.

III. Human Rights Committee's guidelines

8. At its eighteenth session, in its decision III, CEDAW reaffirmed its past practice that "members of the Committee should refrain from participating in any aspect of the consideration of the reports of the States of which they are nationals in order to maintain the highest standards of impartiality, both in substance and appearance".[3]

9. At its sixty-third session, held in November 1997, the Human Rights Committee adopted guidelines for the exercise of functions by members. At its eighteenth session, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women agreed that the guidelines would be circulated among members for their information and comments, and possible consideration at the nineteenth session. With the exception of paragraph 6, concerning participation of Committee members in communications, all paragraphs of the guidelines are relevant to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

> Recommendation: The Committee may wish to propose that the Human Rights Committee's guidelines for the exercise of functions by members, with any comments by members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, be circulated by the Chairperson of the Committee to new members after each election.

IV. Special Rapporteur on violence against women

10. On several occasions, the Committee has stressed the need for cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.[4] At its eighteenth session, the Committee agreed to appoint a focal point from amongst its members to develop a special relationship with the Special Rapporteur. The report of the Special Rapporteur presented at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights[5] is available to Committee members at this session. Specific working procedures to strengthen cooperation between the Committee and the Special Rapporteur and measures that will reinforce their separate, but interrelated, mandates, may include commenting on the reports of the Special Rapporteur. Another possible measure is to alert the Special Rapporteur to specific cases relating to, or patterns of, violence against women, or particular country situations, which may require investigation.

11. With respect to specific working procedures to strengthen cooperation between the Committee and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and other extra-conventional human rights mechanisms, attention is drawn to the ninth meeting of chairpersons of United Nations treaty bodies which recommended that the eleventh meeting be organized to overlap with the meeting of special rapporteurs/representatives, experts and chairpersons of working groups of the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights to be held in May, 1999. The Chairperson of CEDAW could present the views of the Committee on cooperation with the extra-conventional mechanisms at that time.

> Recommendations: The Committee may wish to nominate a focal point to act as liaison with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women. It may also wish to institute procedures of commenting on the reports of the Special Rapporteur and informing her of trends or patterns of violence against women, or particular country situations, which may have come to the attention of the Committee.

V. Concluding comments

12. At its thirteenth session in January 1994, the Committee adopted the practice of preparing concluding comments on the reports of States parties before the Committee, for reflection in the report of the Committee.[6] At the same session, specific procedures were agreed for the preparation of concluding comments, namely, that they should cover the most important points raised during the constructive dialogue, emphasizing both positive aspects of the reports and matters on which the Committee has expressed concern, and should clearly indicate what the Committee wished the State party to focus on in its next report. The comments were to be concise and, where second and subsequent reports were concerned, they should take into account the findings of the pre-session working group, as well as the constructive dialogue.

13. At its fifteenth session in January 1996, in keeping with the requirement of reducing the size of its report on each session, the Committee decided to dispense with the published detailed summary of the constructive dialogue on the reports submitted by States parties. Summary records would, however, be retained and the concluding comments and recommendations of the Committee would be preceded by a brief summary of the presentation of the State party concerned.[7] The brief summary of the presentation of the State party should be an accurate record of the statements made by the State party to the Committee. As agreed, the Secretariat drafts this summary and consults with the State party on its accuracy before including it in the text.

14. At its eighteenth session, the Committee requested the Secretariat to provide it, at its nineteenth session, with the draft guidelines on the formulation of concluding comments.[3] This draft is attached as annex III to the present report.

15. At the ninth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, the importance of high quality

concluding observations, with a particular emphasis on the identification of specific recommendations, was reiterated. The chairpersons noted with approval the strong trend towards a reduction in the length of those parts of the standard format dealing with "factors and difficulties" and "positive factors" and they supported the trend towards combining the sections on "concerns" and "suggestions and recommendations" into a single section, so that the recommendations and the underlying concerns that give rise to them are presented in a coherent manner.[8] Both the Human Rights Committee and the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee formulate their concluding observations in accordance with this format.

> Recommendation: The Committee may wish to review the draft guidelines on the formulation of concluding comments with a view to their adoption. In so doing, it may wish to take into account the strong trend in other treaty bodies of combining the sections on concerns and suggestion and recommendations.

VI. Ninth meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies

16. The ninth meeting of persons charing human rights treaty bodies was convened from 25-27 February 1998 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/118, of 12 December 1997, in which the Assembly welcomed the request of the chairpersons for an extraordinary three-day meeting early in 1998 to pursue the reform process with the aim of improving the effective implementation of international instruments on human rights. The report of the meeting, which has been made available to Committee members, raises a number of issues pertinent to the work of the Committee.

17. The chairpersons reiterated their view that universal ratification of the six core human rights treaties constitutes an essential dimension of a global order committed to the full respect of human rights, and emphasized that ratification of these treaties has benefits which go far beyond the strengthening of the treaty system itself. The chairpersons urged the United Nations system as a whole to accord greater priority to efforts to encourage and facilitate ratification of these treaties and recommended that a major priority of the technical cooperation programme of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be to provide assistance to States, at their request, with the process of ratifying the human rights treaties and, where needed, providing assistance in the preparation of reports. The chairpersons specifically recommended that a letter be sent by the Office of the High Commissioner, after consultation with the chairpersons, requesting the United Nations Development Programme to develop a comprehensive programme within the framework of its activities to facilitate ratification and reporting by States.

> Recommendation: The Committee may wish to consider the implications of these recommendations for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Committee.

18. The chairpersons considered the preliminary conclusions of the International Law Commission on Reservations to Normative Multilateral Treaties including Human Rights Treaties.[9] The chairpersons welcomed the recognition contained in the preliminary conclusions that treaty monitoring bodies have an important competence in relation to reservations. However, they considered that the preliminary conclusions were unduly restrictive and that they paid insufficient attention to the fact that human rights treaties, by virtue of their subject matter and their recognition of individuals, cannot be placed on the same footing as other treaties. The chairpersons expressed the belief that the capacity of a treaty body to perform its function of determining the scope of the provisions of the relevant treaty cannot be performed effectively if it is precluded from exercising a similar function in relation to reservations. They recalled the two general recommendations adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on reservations and expressed support for the approach reflected in general comment 24 adopted by the Human Rights Committee.[10]

> Recommendation: The Committee may wish to take these views into account as it completes its statement on reservations.

19. In their discussion of reporting under the various human rights treaties, the chairpersons addressed the question of the timing of periodic reports which follow a long overdue report. They agreed that it was important to avoid adopting rules or approaches that would encourage States parties to delay the submission of their reports, but considered that it was appropriate for a treaty body to adopt a flexible approach that enabled it to take full account of the circumstances of each case in determining when the subsequent report of a State party which has been overdue in submitting its previous report should be submitted.

> Recommendation: The Committee may wish to take these views into account when it considers long overdue reports, and may choose to depart from the

usual reporting cycle set out in article 18 where individual States parties are concerned.

20. The chairpersons also reiterated their view that there are significant advantages in seeking to focus the periodic reports of States parties on a limited range of issues, which might be identified in advance of the preparation of the report. The chairpersons noted that this approach would reduce the need for very lengthy reports, minimize delays between submission and examination of reports, enable problem areas to be dealt with in depth, and facilitate the follow-up of concluding comments both for the State party and the Committee concerned.[11] The chairpersons considered that the principal criteria in determining the appropriate focus of periodic reports should be the recommendations contained in the previous concluding comments relating to the State party, significant new measures of a legislative, judicial or policy nature adopted since the examination of the last report, and any issues identified by a pre-session working group as requiring a sustained focus. The chairpersons will return to this matter at their tenth meeting in September 1998.

Recommendation: The Committee may wish to provide its Chairperson with its views on the desirability and feasibility of focused periodic reports in preparation of the tenth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies.

21. The chairpersons again discussed the issue of the review of the situation in States parties, whose reports are long overdue, in the absence of a report by that State party. Noting that both the Committees on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination take this approach in cases where reports are long overdue after all alternative approaches have been exhausted, the chairpersons agreed that there was a very strong basis in law and policy to support the consideration of a State party's implementation of treaties in the absence of a report.

22. The chairpersons noted that it would be "anomalous" if States could avoid scrutiny by failing to submit reports that they are under a treaty obligation to produce. They considered that treaty bodies are clearly competent to review cases in which a State party has submitted an initial report, but has failed to supply periodic reports. They agreed that a conclusion that a treaty body is powerless to act in cases where no report has ever been submitted, "would vest unilateral power in every State party to undermine the purposes and objectives" of the relevant treaty. The chairpersons agreed that, when faced with persistent non-reporting States parties, treaty bodies should explore every alternative, including suggesting advisory services and technical assistance. As a final resort, however, treaty bodies should be willing to consider the situation in the State party concerned on the basis of information provided by the State party to other international bodies, and taking into account all other relevant information.

Recommendations: In the light of the fact that a significant number of States parties to the Convention have failed to submit initial and periodic reports, the Committee may wish to adopt the practice, advocated by the chairpersons' meeting, of considering States parties in the absence of a report. The Committee may also wish to consider the types of information it would need to have available in order to consider a State party in the absence of a report.

23. The chairpersons reiterated their concern regarding the burden imposed by treaty reporting obligations on low population States. They requested the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare an analysis for their tenth meeting which would (a) explore the different approaches that could be used in defining "small States" for this purpose, such as using an arbitrary cut-off of a population of less than one million or alternative approaches; (b) facilitate a differentiation between small, but rich and well-resourced States and others; (c) suggest ways in which the reporting burden for such States might be eased, such as the preparation of a consolidated report, special reporting guidelines, presentation of the report to only one treaty body, with others examining it *in absentia*, video-conferencing as a means of presentation, etc.

Recommendation: The Committee may wish to formulate concrete proposals with respect to the reporting obligations of low population States parties which could be discussed by the chairpersons at their tenth meeting in September 1998.

24. The chairpersons encouraged the developing practice of treaty bodies referring to the general comments or general recommendations of other treaty bodies in equivalent statements. They took note of the proposal of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women that it issue a joint statement, with the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, on the indivisibility and centrality of gender awareness in the enjoyment of rights as a part of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A draft statement has been prepared for the Committee's consideration. The Committee may wish to request the Secretariat to forward the statement to the chairpersons of the other treaty bodies concerned.

Recommendation: The Committee may wish to adopt the practice in its general recommendations of referring to the general comments or general recommendations of other treaty bodies where these are relevant.

VII. Commission on the Status of Women

25. At its forty-second session, the Commission on the Status of Women formulated agreed conclusions on the human rights of women; violence against women; women and armed conflict; and the girl child.[12] The Commission also adopted a number of resolutions.[13]

26. In its agreed conclusions on the human rights of women, the Commission urged Governments to ratify and accede to and ensure implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, so that universal ratification of the Convention can be achieved by the year 2000. Governments were requested to limit the extent of any reservations to the Convention, formulate any reservations as precisely and as narrowly as possible, and ensure that no reservations are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention or otherwise incompatible with international treaty law and regularly review them with a view to withdrawing them.

27. In its resolution on violence against women migrant workers,[14] the Commission invited the Committee to develop a general recommendation on women and migration. In its resolution 1998/17 on violence against women migrant workers, the Commission on Human Rights also encouraged the Committee to consider developing a general recommendation on women migrant workers.

Recommendation: The Committee may wish to consider these suggestions in the context of its long-term programme relating to general recommendations.

28. In its draft resolution on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[15] the Commission decided that a high-level plenary review should be held as a special session of the General Assembly for five days from 5 to 9 June 2000 to appraise and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The preparatory work for this special session will be carried out by the Commission at its forty-third and forty-fourth sessions in 1999 and 2000 respectively, both of which will be extended by five days each.

29. To assist in its preparatory work, the Commission invited the Committee to provide information on the implementation of the Platform for Action based on its review of reports of States parties to the Convention which would be submitted to the Commission at its forty-third session in 1999.

Recommendation: The Committee may wish to consider the elements and structure of its report to the Commission and request the Secretariat to prepare a draft for discussion at the twentieth session in January 1999.

VIII. Commission on Human Rights

30. At its fifty-fourth session, the Commission on Human Rights adopted resolution 1998/25 on human rights and extreme poverty in which it invites treaty bodies, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, to take into account the question of extreme poverty and human rights when considering reports of States parties.

31. In its resolution 1998/27 on effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights, the Commission on Human Rights reaffirmed the importance of full and effective implementation of human rights instruments in the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It welcomed the report of the Secretary-General[16] containing a summary of comments and observations on the report of the independent expert on enhancing the long-term effectiveness of the United Nations human rights treaty system,[17] which is available to Committee members at the current session. The Commission invited the Secretary-General to continue to solicit views on the report of the independent expert and to submit a report to the Commission at its fifty-sixth session.

Recommendation: The Committee may wish to comment further on the report of the independent expert on enhancing the long-term effectiveness of the United Nations human rights treaty system, with a view to having its observations reflected in the report of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the Human Rights Commission at its fifty-sixth session in 2000.

32. In resolution 1998/27, the Commission also welcomed the recommendation made at the eighth and ninth meetings of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies that a

priority of the technical cooperation programme of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be to provide assistance to States parties, upon their request, with the implementation of their obligations under United Nations human rights instruments and, in particular, the recommendation made at the ninth meeting concerning the provision of assistance to States, upon their request, in the process of ratifying such instruments and the preparation of initial reports. Human rights treaty bodies were also encouraged to continue to identify specific possibilities for technical assistance, to be provided at the request of the State concerned, in the regular course of their work of reviewing the periodic reports of States parties.

33. At its sixteenth session, the Committee made various suggestions with respect to technical and advisory services,[18] and at its eighteenth session the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provided a statement on technical and advisory services of the Office and how the Convention and the Committee could be promoted through those services.

> Recommendation: The Committee may wish to adopt the practice of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Committee whose concluding observations frequently include, and make specific suggestions to the possibility of States parties obtaining technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Committee may be able to identify areas, such as review of reservations, assistance with legislative review and reform where the provision of technical assistance could contribute to the improvement of the human rights of women in the State concerned.

IX. Reports to be considered at the twentieth, twenty-first and twenty-second sessions

34. At its seventeenth session, the Committee adopted decision 17/II, in which it decided that "the maximum number of reports to be considered at each session will normally be eight, drawn from a proposed list of up to ten countries".[19] The Committee therefore proposed a list of States parties from which eight reports would be selected for review at the twentieth session. The Committee may wish to review its proposed list for the twentieth session and, in drawing up the list for the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions, it may wish to take account of annex II, which indicates reports of States parties that are available, particularly those available in the official languages.

Notes

[1] At its twelfth session, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women decided that the Secretariat should prepare a report on ways and means of improving the work of the Committee every year (see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 38*) (A/48/38), para. 632. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/68 of 12 December 1996, in which the Assembly authorized the Committee to hold two sessions annually, the Secretariat has provided the Committee with a report on ways and means for each session.

[2] CCPR/C/63/CRP.2/Add.2.

[3] A/53/38, part I (mimeo). To be issued as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/53/38).

[4] The mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women was extended for a further three years by the Commission on Human Rights in resolution 1997/44.

[5] E/CN.4/1998/54 and Add.1.

[6] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/49/38), paras. 812-817.

[7] Decision 15/III, *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/51/38), I, A. p. 1.

[8] Report of the ninth meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies, A/53/125, para. 32.

[9] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 10* (A/52/10), Report of the International Law Commission on the Work of its Forty-ninth Session, para. 157.

[10] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 40* (A/40/40), vol. I, annex V, pp. 124-130.

[11] Report of the eighth meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies, A/52/507, annex, para. 35.

[12] CRP, 1-4.

[13] E/CN.6/1998/L.3; L.5; L.6; L.7; L.8; L.9; L.10; L.11.

[14] E/CN.6/1998/L.7.

[15] E/CN.6/1998/L.11.

[16] E/CN.4/1998/85 and Add.1.

[17] E/CN.4/1997/74.

[18] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/52/38/Rev.1), part one, chap. I.B, decision 16/I, p. 1.

[19] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/52/38/Rev.1), part two, chap. I.B, p. 71.

Annex I

States parties whose reports are more than five years overdue

State party	*Date due*
A. Initial reports	
Angola	17 October 1987
Benin	11 April 1993
Bhutan	30 September 1982
Brazil	2 March 1985
Burundi	7 February 1993
Cape Verde	3 September 1982
Central African Republic	21 July 1992
Congo	25 August 1983
Costa Rica	4 May 1987
Dominica	3 September 1982
Estonia	20 November 1992
Grenada	29 September 1991
Guinea	8 September 1983
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1986
Haiti	3 September 1982
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1982
Latvia	14 May 1993
Liberia	16 August 1985
Malta	7 April 1992
Nepal	22 May 1992
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1986
Saint Lucia	7 November 1983
Sierra Leone	11 December 1989
Togo	26 October 1984
Trinidad and Tobago	11 February 1991
B. Second periodic reports	
Angola	17 October 1991
Bhutan	30 September 1986
Brazil	2 March 1989

State party	*Date due*
Cape Verde	3 September 1986
Congo	25 August 1987
Costa Rica	4 May 1991
Dominica	3 September 1986
Gabon	20 February 1988
Guinea	8 September 1987
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1990
Guyana	3 September 1986
Haiti	3 September 1986
Iraq	12 September 1991
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1986
Liberia	16 August 1989
Malawi	11 April 1992
Mali	10 October 1990
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1990
Saint Lucia	7 November 1987
Togo	26 October 1988
Viet Nam	19 March 1987

C. Third periodic reports

Bhutan	30 September 1990
Brazil	2 March 1993
Cape Verde	3 September 1990
Congo	25 August 1991
Dominica	3 September 1990
El Salvador	18 September 1990
France	13 January 1993
Gabon	20 February 1992
Guatemala	11 September 1991
Guinea	8 September 1991
Guyana	3 September 1990
Haiti	3 September 1990
Kenya	8 April 1993
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1990

State party	*Date due*
Mongolia	3 September 1990
Saint Lucia	7 November 1991
Sri Lanka	4 November 1990
Togo	26 October 1992
Viet Nam	19 March 1991
Yugoslavia	28 March 1991

Annex II

States parties whose reports have been submitted but have not yet been considered by the Committee

State party	*Date due*	*Date received*	*Document symbol*
A. Initial reports			
Belize[a c]	15 September 1991	19 September 1996	CEDAW/C/BLZ/1-2
Democratic Republic of the Congo[a b]	16 November 1987	1 March 1994	CEDAW/C/ZAR/1
Georgia	25 November 1985	9 March 1998	CEDAW/C/GEO/1
Jordan	31 July 1993	27 October 1997	CEDAW/C/JOR/1
Liechtenstein[c]	21 January 1997	4 August 1997	CEDAW/C/LIE/1
B. Second periodic reports			
Belize[a c]	15 June 1995	19 June 1996	CEDAW/C/BLZ/1-2
Burkina Faso	13 November 1992	11 December 1997	CEDAW/C/BFA/2-3
Chile[a c]	6 January 1995	9 March 1995	CEDAW/C/CHI/2
Democratic Republic of the Congo[a b]	16 November 1991	24 October 1996	CEDAW/C/ZAR/2
Equatorial Guinea[a]	22 November 1989	6 January 1994	CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3
Germany	9 August 1990	8 October 1996	CEDAW/C/DEU/2-3
Greece	7 July 1988	1 March 1996	CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3
Ireland	22 January 1991	6 February 1997	CEDAW/C/IRL/2-3
Jamaica	18 November 1989	17 February 1998	CEDAW/C/JAM/2-4
Thailand[c]	8 September 1990	3 March 1997	CEDAW/C/THA/2-3
Uruguay	8 November 1986	3 February 1998	CEDAW/C/URY/2-3
C. Third periodic reports			
Austria[c]	30 April 1991	25 April 1997	CEDAW/C/AUT/3-4
Belarus[c]	3 September 1990	1 July 1993	CEDAW/C/BLR/3
Burkina Faso	13 November 1996	11 December 1997	CEDAW/C/BFA/2-3
China[c]	3 September 1990	29 May 1997	CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4
Egypt	18 October 1990	30 January 1996	CEDAW/C/EGY/3
Equatorial Guinea[a]	22 November 1993	6 January 1994	CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3
Finland	4 October 1995	28 January 1997	CEDAW/C/FIN/3
Germany	9 August 1994	8 October 1996	CEDAW/C/DEU/2-3
Greece	7 July 1992	1 March 1996	CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3
Ireland	22 January 1995	7 August 1997	CEDAW/C/IRL/2-3
Jamaica	18 November 1993	17 February 1998	CEDAW/C/JAM/2-4
Luxembourg	4 March 1998	12 March 1998	CEDAW/C/LUX/3
Spain[c]	4 February 1993	20 May 1996	CEDAW/C/ESP/3
Thailand[c]	8 September 1994	3 March 1997	CEDAW/C/THA/2-3
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland[a c]	7 May 1995	16 August 1995 8 August 1997	CEDAW/C/UK/3 CEDAW/C/UK/3/Add.1
Uruguay	8 November 1990	3 February 1998	CEDAW/C/URY/2-3

State party	*Date due*	*Date received*	*Document symbol*
D. Fourth periodic reports			
Austria[c]	30 April 1995	25 April 1997	CEDAW/C/AUT/3-4
China[c]	3 September 1994	29 May 1997	CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4
Colombia[c]	18 February 1995	8 July 1997	CEDAW/C/COL/4
Denmark	21 May 1996	9 January 1997	CEDAW/C/DEN/4
Jamaica	18 November 1997	17 February 1998	CEDAW/C/JAM/2-4
Sweden	3 September 1994	21 May 1996	CEDAW/C/SWE/4

[a] Reports that have been translated, reproduced and made available in all official languages.

[b] By a communication dated 20 May 1997, the Secretariat was informed by the Member State formerly known as Zaire that the name of the State had been changed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

[c] To be considered by the Committee at its twentieth session, to be held in New York in January 1999.

Annex III

Proposed procedures and format for the elaboration of concluding comments

1. The Committee designates from among its members a country rapporteur for the report of each State party.

2. The country rapporteur seeks additional information about the State party under review. The findings of the country rapporteur are presented as a briefing on the report at a closed meeting before the State party's presentation. In the case of periodic reports, the rapporteur's report is sent in advance to the pre-session working group.[a]

3. The Committee holds a closed meeting after the constructive dialogue to consider the main issues and trends to be reflected in the concluding comments relating to the report of the State party. Concluding comments drafted thereafter reflect only the views expressed at the meetings during which the report is presented, and not the views of the individual country rapporteurs.

4. The expert nominated as the country rapporteur drafts the concluding comments in close collaboration with the general rapporteur of the Committee and with the support of the Secretariat.

5. Concluding comments usually follow a standard format under the following five headings: Introduction; positive aspects; factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention; principal areas of concern; suggestions and recommendations.[b]

6. The introduction contains comments on whether the report has followed the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of initial and periodic reports; whether or not it was sufficient; whether it incorporated or referred to statistical information disaggregated by sex; and on the nature and relevance of the oral presentation. An objective indication of the strengths of the report and the strength of the delegation is generally included.

7. The section entitled "Positive aspects" is organized in the order of the articles of the Convention.

8. The "Factors and difficulties" section describes the major reasons why the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has not been implemented fully by the State party. Overarching factors, such as the impact of economic factors, including structural adjustment, and political factors, such as transition and new forms of governance on women in the State party under review are addressed in this section. Any reservations to the Convention are also addressed in this section,[c] as well as the question of whether the Convention is self-executing and whether legislation has been put in place to give effect to the Convention.

9. The section on "Principal areas of concern" is organized in the order of importance of the particular issues to the country under review.

10. The "Recommendations and suggestions" section provides concrete proposals from the Committee on the problems identified in the rest of the comments.

11. The concluding comments include reference to any commitments of the State party made at the Fourth World Conference on Women (4-15 September 1995).

12. Concluding comments close with a recommendation relating to dissemination, requesting the wide dissemination of the concluding comments in the State party concerned, in order to make the people in the State party, and particularly its government administrators and politicians aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in that regard. It also requests the State party to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

13. Each concluding comment is internally balanced, with the "Factors and difficulties" and "Principal areas of concern" mirrored by specific suggestions and recommendations. The Committee also strives to achieve consistence and balance, particularly in terms of praise and expressions of concern, among the concluding comments elaborated at each session. Accordingly, the Committee considers concluding comments comparatively in an effort to ensure that they are even.

Notes

[a] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/52/38/Rev.1), Part II, para. 469.

[b] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/52/38/Rev.1), Part II, para. 471. Note, this overtakes decision 16/I where the pattern

agreed was Introduction; factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention; positive aspects; principal areas of concern; suggestions and recommendations: *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/52/38/Rev.1), Part I, A, 16/I.

[c] At its thirteenth session, the Committee agreed that for those States parties that have entered substantive reservations to the Convention, it would include in the concluding comments it prepares following the review of their reports a section in which the Committee's views on reservations would be reflected: *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/49/38), Chapter I, C, para. 10.